

January 2023

A Principle of Obedience

This year the theme for our stake and the youth comes from Philippians 4:13. It says, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

That is a very positive message! We are not asked to be perfect, to run faster than we have strength, or to do everything at once. However, we are asked to make an effort. President Nelson has said, “The Lord loves effort.”

I know through personal experience that when I ask for the Lord’s help and then make an honest effort to do the things we are counseled to do by church leaders, I can experience Christ enabling power and I am able to do more than I thought possible for me alone. I know that Christ does strengthen me, especially as I strive to do what He has asked, whether by His own voice or the voice of His servants.

As we start a new year, let us look forward to preparing for the Second Coming of Christ as our prophet has counseled us to do. We have been told by our prophet and apostles in many ways how to do this, both temporally and spiritually. For the Lord has said, “All things unto me are spiritual.” D&C 29:344. Here are three things you can do to put your life in order and prepare for the future.

Choose Faith

The first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is growing increasingly unpopular in the world we live in, and this trend will probably continue to increase. Perhaps choosing faith over fear, personal desire, or popular opinion is the most vital thing we can do in these latter days.

Choosing faith means believing in Christ. It also means trusting in Him enough to follow His counsel. That means not only listening for our own personal revelation, but also heeding the counsel He gives to our prophet, apostles and local leaders for us. Sure you can pray about something you disagree with, but there are blessings that come through obedience too. It is reckless to simply dismiss the things you don’t want to hear up front without serious prayer and pondering. The Lord wants us to use our minds to work and reason through things, but He also wants us to listen and obey. Sometimes if you are on the line, simply acting through faith and obedience may be the most important thing you can do.

Listen and Heed

As people listen to the news, or even church leaders, they often make one of three choices.

1. They choose selective hearing and pay attention only to what they want to hear or not hear and what allows them to see the world as they want to see it, and do what they want to do.
2. They choose to become fearful and afraid from the things they hear on the news and this becomes their focus. They can become depressed, anxious, or immobilized. They are incapacitated by voices other than the Lord’s to the point that is all they hear.
3. They choose to take the things that are happening in the world into account, and then to focus on the Lord and His counsel. They listen to the prophets, apostles, and local leaders and note what they say. They pray and listen for the guidance of the Holy Ghost. They act on the counsel that is given, and they listen for more.

The people in example 3 are the ones who build greater faith in the Lord. They are the ones who are practicing listening to “the voice of the Lord” and learning to have stronger faith to follow and stay close to Him. These are the ones whose faith is stronger than fear.

Trust and Obey

Trust and obedience develop a relationship with our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ that allows us to have the constant guiding, directing, and comforting influence of the Holy Ghost. As we develop this kind of a relationship with the Lord He will be with us through our trials and warn us of dangers. This kind of relationship will allow Him to safely guide us home.

From My Own Experience

I have been either a missionary or in a ward or stake calling working with emergency preparedness for 10 years this year. I have heard a lot of excuses, rationalizations, and opinions in that much time. I believe that everyone's picture of what will happen in an emergency and what kind of emergencies we might face are a little bit different. I know of many people who have died with their food storage tucked away and they never needed it.

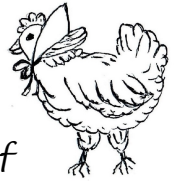
While I know a lot on this topic there is always more to learn, and if you are doing it right, preparedness is something that isn't really ever finished. It is a work in progress. However, there is one thing I believe for sure. This is a principle of obedience. I think that what we choose to do with the counsel to prepare is more important than what we choose to store or what happens in an actual emergency. The Lord blesses us for the commandments (and leader counsel) that we choose to keep, and I want His blessing for this one as well as the others. While this seems like it is really only a "temporal thing," and many see it as less important than "spiritual things" we are asked to do, I can honestly say that I have grown spiritually in ways I never would have expected as I have worked with and learned about preparedness. I don't think the Lord sees it as "only temporal."

In conclusion, I urge anyone who reads this paper to take time to reflect on what they are doing to prepare for not only emergencies, but also for the Second Coming of Christ and set your goals accordingly.

Fun Stuff

Garden in a Jar - This is great for winter! Put 2 T of sprouting seeds (order on line) in a glass quart jar. Rinse them using a strainer or nylon tooling rubber banded to the top of the jar. Cover with water and let sit overnight. Drain the water in the morning. Rinse and drain twice a day for 3–5 days. Enjoy on sandwiches, in a salad, or added to a smoothie or stir fry (depending on what you sprouted). * The easiest to get and sprout are lentils. They make a nice sprout and you can just buy them at the grocery store. 1 lb of lentils can last a long time. Wheat is easy to sprout too if it is not old wheat. However, it should be eaten by day 3 or it will be too sweet.

Notes from Red Hen



History: The Little Red Hen column was added to the Provident Papers a long time ago. It is a take-off from the story of the Little Red Hen who found some grains of wheat and asked who would help her plant them. The dog, the cat, the horse, and the pig would not help. They would not help her water, weed, harvest, or mill the wheat either. Each time she would answer, "Then I'll do it myself." However, when she made bread, everyone wanted to help her eat the bread. Guess what she said.

I added this to the papers after an incident where my son was helping me shelf some jars of canned fruit and asked if I was going to be like the Little Red Hen in a crisis. My reply to him was that while I would not want to see my neighbors go hungry I really didn't have space, time and money to store for more than our family's needs. That didn't even include the task of keeping things rotated. I honestly still don't have all the answers to this dilemma. It is always easy to share when you know that things can soon be replaced, such as in a local natural disaster. However, in a situation that is long term, where you know it may mean your own family goes hungry, it is a harder question. This is a case in which justice and mercy are at odds with each other. Is it merciful or just for your family to go without while you feed those who could have prepared and didn't? There can be a lot of debate on both sides of this topic. - Something to think about.